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YALE LECTURES ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.*

Thirty years ago the author of this book entered upon the Sunday-school field as the field of his chosen life work. These lectures are the ripe fruit of his experience and investigations during that period. They treat of the membership and management of the Sunday-school, of its teachers and their training, of the relation of the pastor to the school, of the auxiliaries of the Sunday-school, and of the importance and difficulties, and the principles and methods of preaching to children. We desire to call special attention to the lectures on the origin and varying progress of the Sunday-school. The facts presented in these will be a real surprise to many readers. Dr. Trumbull finds the Sunday-school to be no modern institution; but, as "an agency of the church where the Word of God is taught interlocutorily or catechetically to children and other learners," it is of Jewish origin and as old as the Synagogue. Jesus himself in his childhood was a Sunday-school scholar and later on a Sunday-school teacher. He gave the command to start Sunday-schools everywhere. This is in the great commission (Matt. 28:19,20). "The direction therein is to organize Bible-schools everywhere as the very basis, the initial form, of the Christian Church. Grouping scholars—the child and the child-like—in classes, under skilled teachers, for the study of the Word of God by means of an interlocutory co-work between teacher and scholars; that is the starting point of Christ's Church, as he founded it. Whatever else is added, these features must not be lacking" (p. 37). This ancient origin of the Sunday-school and such an interpretation of Scripture, Dr. Trumbull does not present as a surmise, speculation or theory, resting on general principles or commending itself by its own sweet reasonableness, but he firmly establishes his view by presenting the facts upon which it is based. It is a delightful characteristic of Dr. Trumbull's work as a writer, that he buttresses his positions by constant reference to authorities and quotations from them, showing most careful inductive research and study. One notices especially in this work the use made of Jewish writings.

Another striking fact brought out in these lectures is that catechisms were not designed by their framers to be unintelligibly committed by children to memory as a means of storing away religious truth. "It would seem in short that the very method of 'learning' the Westminster Catechism, which has been more common than any other in the last two centuries, and which even has many advocates and admirers to-day, is a method which the Westminster Divines themselves stigmatized as 'parrot' learning, and as contrary to the light of nature and natural reason" (p. 83).

We wish this work might be in the hands of every Sunday-school teacher and pastor in our land. It is attractive in form and furnished with copious indexes.

* THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL; its Origin, Mission, Methods and Auxiliaries. The Lyman Beecher Lectures before Yale Divinity School for 1888, by H. Clay Trumbull, Editor of the *Sunday School Times*, Author of *Kadesh Barnea*, the Blood Covenant, Teaching and Teachers, etc. Philadelphia: John D. Wattles, Publisher, 1888.